

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

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 Death of Stalin  
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1. The death of Stalin as well as the subsequent changes in Moscow reportedly came as a relief to sore parts of the Czechoslovak population. It is generally believed that the imminent danger of another world war has been averted. The number of changes, also perceptible in Prague, was explained partly as resulting from the Slansky trial, and partly as having to do with the governmental changes in Moscow. Stalin's personality is now explained by the official Czechoslovak Communist propaganda as follows: Stalin, no doubt, was a genius but, naturally, such a man comes only once in many years. Therefore Stalin, the giant of the Soviet state, could afford certain steps which nobody dared criticize. But now, after his death, there being no substitute for his greatness nor for his leadership, matters must be taken up otherwise.

2. In connection with the above changes Slansky's case is viewed differently, too. Slansky and his group were not criminals, nor was Slansky a Titoist. He was rather, the prototype of a dictator who wanted to concentrate all the state power under his own control. He therefore gathered a group of his adherents around himself and put them into all the leading offices and thus controlled all the vitality of the state. His ambition was, in accordance with the Moscow policy, to turn Czechoslovakia into an economically self-supporting unit absolutely independent of the West. For this reason travel of commercial delegates to Western countries was restricted, and non-communists were never permitted to travel abroad. But at present, even delegates who are not members of the Communist Party and who are needed as experts or who have a positive attitude towards socialist work, are being sent abroad to represent the interests of Czechoslovak industry. Capitalist class origin or non-membership in the Communist Party is no longer a reason for discrimination. It is believed that such persons should now be rewarded for not having joined the Party in 1948 merely in order to secure good jobs, but who have, although not members of the Party, proved their good relationship to the state and regime through diligent work in inferior jobs. So, for example, a Czechoslovak delegation to Oslo in June 1953 comprised two Communist Party members and two non-members. There is a general belief among the population that the Czechoslovak Communist Party received instructions from Moscow to relax their political curbs regarding qualified technical specialists in order to secure the smooth running of industry.

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3. In the economic line Slansky's group strongly supported large industrial projects regardless of whether they could be borne by the economic structure of the state. So, for example, although the project of HUKO Steelworks in eastern Slovakia had far-reaching aims, it was territorially located so that it was in no way suitable for creating a foundry industry, labor resources and labor reserves, coal in the surroundings, good quality iron ore, means of transport - all these are lacking there. And so, after Slansky's group had been liquidated, the speed of building up the HUKO Steelworks was decreased and it seems that its planned extent shall not be attained. Slansky was also charged with financing Palestine's economic development. There is no doubt that the CSR took a series of definite steps against Jewish citizens. Jews are being removed from administrative jobs and are being assigned to manual labor in industry.